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REPORT OF EVENTS IN NEW ZEALAND

Harry Bruhns

24 October 1986

1. Meeting with Helen Clark

2. Labour Party Conference

3. Other News

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MEETING WITH HELEN CLARK (MP for Mt Albert) : 10 June 1986

Clark requested a meeting after her visit to Indonesia. The main point that she wanted to make was that she could not see Indonesia willingly granting independence to East Timor under any circumstances, and nor would any countries in the West force it (if that were possible). I presume she wanted a reaction to that. I agreed with her, as far as the near future is concerned, but that the East Timor Independence Centre as not going to change its stance.

Other matters discussed included:

* Labour Government policy for the next election. She said that was being drafted, that independence would not be able to be a part of that policy, did I have any suggestions. I said to specifically include Fretilin the encouragement of talks. She thought that would be possible.

* Clark expressed considerable concern about transmigration.

* Described meetings with the Human Rights Forum.

* Said that she accepts Indonesia's importance to New Zealand, and that this country has to work on bilateral relations. In other respects Indonesia is not unhelpful to NZ, and in particular is a supporter of NZ's nuclear free harbours policy.

* She described an incident in the NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs that may be of some significance. Apparently a large NZ construction company (McConnell and Dowell) was seeking a contract to provide metal for a border road in West Papua. McConnell and Dowell sought assistance to win this contract from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A 'major row' resulted in the Ministry over whether or not the company should be assisted and eventually 'orders from above' settled the issue and the assistance was refused.

* Discussed prospects of a 'special arrangement' for East Timor. Clark quoted the example of Achae.

LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

The remit submitted to the Labour Party conference was substantially altered by the conference. This occurred despite the frequently quite radical mood of the conference, as indicated by remits passed in some other areas. The reason the East Timor remit was altered was that Helen Clark (MP for Mt Albert) spoke against parts of the remit. Clark is known as a leader among the radical/progressive sections of the party, and has considerable influence among these sections. She has also in the past been one of the strongest supporters of East Timor in Parliament, and as chairperson of the Foreign Affairs debate at the conference, was in a position of some power to influence the vote.

Her reasons for this action are unknown - I have written to her (copy attached) but not as yet had a reply. She visited Indonesia in June 1986.

REMIT SUMITTED (Remit no. 112)

This conference calls upon the Labour Government to:

a) Abandon its de facto policy of support for the Indonesian occupation of East Timor.

b) Through the United Nations, vigorously denounce the reign of terror by the occupying country against the indigenous people of East Timor.

c) Take firm action to encourage progress towards a U.N. sponsored act of self-determination by the East Timorese people.

d) As an interim policy, send humanitarian aid to the resistance movement of East Timor, Fretilin.

REMIT AS PASSED

a) Continue to express concern to the Indonesian Government and at the United Nations about human rights violations in East Timor when there is evidence of them.

b) Continue to send humanitarian aid to East Timor through reputable international agencies.

c) Encourage progress in the negotiations being undertaken by the United Nations Secretary-General for a political settlement of the East Tiomor issue and urge that participation in those negotiations be broadened to include representatives of the East Timorese people such as Fretilin, the UDT, and the Catholic Church in East Timor.

The end result could have been worse, but the original remit would have vastly preferable.

EAST TIMOR INDEPENDENCE CENTRE
Wellington, New Zealand

OTHER NEWS

* It seems that East Timor is going to be a long struggle, whatever happens in the United Nations. Our strategy at the moment is to divert resources that we have been using to lobby the Government to begin to establish a broader base. Support within the Labour Party is already strong. Indeed the East Timor issue was discussed longer and more controversially than any other Foreign Affairs issue. This part of the debate received very effective nationwide coverage.

* The East Timor Independence Centre (ETIC) has started a newsletter, one issue so far (copy enclosed).

* Apologies to those who have been waiting for information from NZ. A lack of people/resouces is a problem, and an additional reason for broadening the base of support.

* Other activities include:
  - Agio's attendence at the South Pacific Trade Union Forum (May 86).
  - Abel Guterres visit to New Zealand. Spoke to supporting groups, Jim Anderton (MP) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (who seem to have become quite sensitive to the existence of ETIC).
  - Independence day activities. Media coverage minimal but for one feature story on East Timor.

* Several orders for Jose's book have been placed.

Sent to Tapol
Jose Horta
Japan
Portugal
Pat Walsh